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TEACHERS' PROBLEMS WITH EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

III

Mentally Retarded Children

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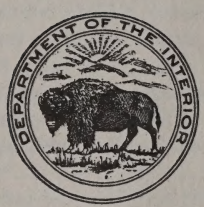

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U.S. Office of Education

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TEACHERS' PROBLEMS WITH EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN[1]

INTRODUCTION

"Education of all the children of all the people." The principle expressed in these words is so familiar to every teacher of the modern school that the phrase has become proverbial. In teachers' preparatory courses, in conferences of State teachers associations, in educational publications, on every educational platform one hears and reads repeatedly of the educational birthright of every child, of the responsibility of the school to make of pupil-activities an experience in living which is within the child's power of realization and appreciation and which will at the same time help to prepare him for a contributing adult citizenship.

If this is the task of education, then the teacher comes face to face with the problem of adjustment. He must meet the challenge of the unending array of individual differences and individual needs which the pupils in his class present. His is the responsibility of adjusting his attitude and his methods, of adapting the curriculum and materials to the capacities and the interests of the boys and girls who come daily under his instruction. We have attempted in our general educational scheme to group into one classroom or grade some 30 or 40 or more children who have reached approximately the same degree of academic achievement. Yet every teacher knows that among those 30 or 40 children there are some who would forge far ahead of accepted standards if given the opportunity to do so, and that there are others who lag far behind even in spite of every opportunity to work along with their fellows. There are some who are suffering from physical handicaps and others who show signs of serious emotional difficulty. To each of these the school owes an equal responsibility for that training which will serve best the individual's

[1] This is the third of a series of pamphlets dealing with "Teachers' problems with exceptional children." See back of title page for others in the series, as well as for a complete list of publications on exceptional children issued by the United States Office of Education.

own needs and which will make of him a citizen who will be able and willing to serve his community according to his talents.

In many city school systems attempts have been made to provide for these individual needs of our boys and girls through various systems of classification, of special schools and classes, and of clinical service. In some there are well-organized departments of special education with excellent supervisory facilities and trained teachers. These are pointing the way toward the means of giving adequate attention to those pupils who deviate seriously from normal in physical, mental, or social equipment. To many who are teaching in such cities this series of pamphlets will not offer much that is new. It is more specifically designed, first, for those teachers who are working in rural or small urban districts where no special classes exist and who must provide for exceptional children as members of their own groups of supposedly normal pupils; and, second, for teachers of special classes who are handicapped by the absence of constructive supervision and perhaps even by their own lack of adequate preparation for this specialized type of education.

What, then, is the teacher's responsibility, if he belongs to either of these two groups? He cannot avoid the issue or run away from his problem, for there it is facing him day after day as he enters the classroom. If he is to meet it with any measure of success, then he has a fivefold program before him.

First, he must know what the problem is.—Who are "exceptional" children? What types of deviations from normal demand special consideration? What constitutes a serious deviation? In answering these questions it is well to point to the classification which has been adopted by committees of the White House Conference. Eight major groups of "exceptional" children are recognized, as follows: (1) The crippled; (2) the deaf and the hard of hearing; (3) the blind and the partially seeing; (4) the speech defective; (5) children of lowered vitality, suffering from anæmic, pretuberculous, or cardiac difficulties; (6) the mentally retarded; (7) the mentally gifted; (8) children presenting serious behavior problems.

The first five of these groups belong to the general classification of physically handicapped children, the next two constitute those who are mentally different, and the last group may be considered as socially maladjusted. The physical, mental, and social realms are thus all represented among our "exceptional" children. The particular needs of the various groups are, of course, quite different, but each child in any one of these groups offers a serious challenge to the teacher to seek out that which will mean the most for him individually in his educational development.

The second task before the teacher is to recognize the problem which exists in his own classroom.—The mere knowledge that there are exceptional children in the world will not help him unless he can find out for how many he himself is responsible. The teacher who has been assigned to a special class made up wholly of exceptional children is spared this difficulty, for presumably an accurate diagnosis has already been made of each case. But the teacher who must care for normal and exceptional pupils alike in one room has a real problem on his hands. He must know the symptoms of extreme deviation and he must learn to recognize those symptoms in the children before him. Perhaps he will find that one child cannot see the writing on the blackboard, that another is so hard of hearing that he has to be given a front seat and even there he does not always hear what the teacher says; that a third has been failing in his school work year after year; that a fourth is intellectually so keen that it is hard to keep him busy. It is not uncommon to find a group of four—or even more—such children in the same class, each exceptional in his own way and each presenting different needs. Some of them force themselves upon the teacher's attention; others need to be discovered.

Third, the ability to recognize extreme deviations comes only through careful observation and study of the individual child.—Every child is different from every other child and presents the need for sympathetic, conscientious, intelligent scrutiny. Sometimes this very scrutiny will reveal differences that the teacher had never dreamed of before and will show how very exceptional in one way or another the child really is. Whether in the regular classroom or in a special class the need for child study is the same; for even though a

preliminary diagnosis has already been made resulting in the child's assignment to a special class, yet it remains for the teacher to study his abilities and disabilities, his physical and his mental equipment, his personality and his environment. The whole child becomes truly educated only when the teacher bends every energy to know and to guide the whole child.

The fourth responsibility of the teacher is to "apply first aid" to the exceptional children whom he has discovered in his room and whose natures and needs he has made the object of study. However inexperienced or untrained he may be in special education, there are some things which every teacher can do in meeting existing demands of physical, mental or social deviations if he will but give the requisite time and thought to the problem. Particularly in the rural school is the teacher almost always forced to rely upon his own resources in handling the child who is either far below or above normal in intelligence, who needs some special physical attention, or who is causing a serious disturbance through his antisocial conduct. We may be working toward the organization of special classes in communities of all sizes, but while we are waiting for this objective to be realized the special problems still persist and demand the teacher's attention. His daily contact with the child makes him the logical person to give the greatest amount of help at least in an elementary way. It is he who must be prepared to adapt his methods and materials to the peculiar needs and possibilities of each exceptional child. It is he who must know what to do if he finds one hard-of-hearing child, one child with defective vision, and one seriously retarded child in his class. It is he, too, who must be able to meet the parents,[2] to explain the difficulties that prevail, and to secure for the child the attention at home which will supplement the provision which the school is able to make.

Fifth, and last, the teacher should know where to seek further aid of a specialized type.—What resources does the community afford in medical or psychological assistance of clinical nature? What agencies exist in the county, in the State, in the Nation, that may be called upon? How can

[2] For help in dealing with parents, teachers are referred to the United States Office of Education Bulletin, 1932, no. 14, on Parents' Problems with Exceptional Children.

the teacher make contact with these agencies and what may he expect of them ? Help that comes from without can bring to the earnest seeker substantial reenforcement. The resources of a whole nation may literally be called upon to help solve the problem of a single child tucked away somewhere in an inconspicuous country school district.

It is to help the teacher carry out this fivefold program in the interests of exceptional children that this series of publications is issued. The general nature of the problem has already been stated, with an enumeration of the eight major types of children with which we are concerned. The remaining steps of the program are considered in successive pamphlets, each of which deals with a particular type of child. How to recognize extreme deviations, how to study the child, how to meet some of the fundamental problems involved in teaching him, and how to secure specialized aid are all discussed in turn. It is hoped that each teacher may find in these pages some tangible values that will answer his questions and that can be applied to the local situation in which he finds himself.

Many teachers, however, will not rest content with this elementary knowledge of "first-aid" principles. Some of them will be seeking further training for more efficient service. Specialized courses which are now being offered in normal schools, colleges, and universities [3] furnish a real opportunity for enlarging one's understanding of exceptional children and increasing one's skill in dealing with them. Many of these courses are given during summer sessions so that no time need be lost during the school year. Here one may study under competent guidance the nature of subnormality or genius, the psychology of blindness or deafness or speech defect; the mental hygiene of behavior disorders; the mental background of the child who has a crippled body or other serious physical defect. One may study also the possibilities and the limitations inherent in these conditions, their educational needs, and their methods of treatment. And the goal toward which all such study is directed is that which challenges the teacher every day of

[3] See U.S. Office of Education Bulletin, 1931, no. 21, Opportunities for the Preparation of Teachers of Exceptional Children. This bulletin may be secured at 5 cents per copy from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.

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his life—the ability to minimize the limitations and to capitalize the capacities of each child for his greatest personal happiness and his greatest service to the community.

PROBLEMS WITH MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

The significance of the problem of serious mental retardation can be expressed in no more effective way than through the words of George L. Wallace, late superintendent of the Wrentham State School in Massachusetts. He said: "If society does not keep mentally deficient children busy in a *constructive* way during the whole of their school lives, they, in a *destructive* way, will keep society busy during their adult lives." The laggard in school all too often becomes the delinquent or the dependent in society because the school has not properly understood his limitations or drawn forth his capacities. When committees of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection[4] tell us that "it is generally conceded that at least 2 percent, or 450,000 of the pupils in the elementary grades, are mentally retarded to such a degree that they require special education to make the most of their possibilities", we are forced to recognize the tremendous burden which society will have to bear if it fails to provide through the schools the type of special instruction which will make of these children self-controlled, self-supporting citizens. No greater responsibility, therefore, faces the teacher than to study the problems arising from the presence of mentally retarded children in his classroom.

1. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE "MENTALLY RETARDED" CHILD?

Mental retardation is of many degrees, varying from a condition which is but slightly below normal to that which shows extreme mental deficiency. We are concerned here only with the more serious aspects of the problem insofar as it can be handled in the public day schools. Institutional care is outside our consideration at this time; so also is the problem of the child who is somewhat backward in his school work, perhaps even slightly retarded in his intellectual growth, yet able to make progress slowly. Children may fail to be promoted once or twice, need some additional coaching, remedial help in specific subjects, or curricular

[4] Special Education: The Handicapped and the Gifted. New York, The Century Co., p. 439.

adjustment, and yet be able to complete at least the elementary school and even a part or all of a high-school course. But there are a few who are so far below normal intellectually that the regular classroom is either a place of torture for them because constant failure wounds their spirit, or it is a place of idleness because they have ceased to try or to care. For such exceptional children there must be a special program planned that will bring interest, effort, and success; and these are the ones who constitute our special concern in these pages. Many of them might correctly be called "mentally deficient", or even "feeble-minded." The term "mentally retarded", however, is a milder characterization and a kinder, safer one to use in school circles, particularly in talking with parents. To fathers and mothers the word "retarded" is much less objectionable than "deficient", and certainly less so than "feeble-minded." There is no reason why we should not respect their feelings in the matter insofar as it is possible to do so.

Every teacher has heard something of intelligence tests and intelligence quotients. Speaking in terms of these values, we may say that an intelligence quotient (I.Q.) of 100 would ideally represent a normal level of intelligence—that which the average individual possesses. But because normal intelligence cannot be defined as existing only at a single point, and because our tests for measuring intelligence are still not perfect, we say that the range of normal intelligence extends from approximately 90 to 110 I.Q. As we go below 90, the level of ability decreases, and at 75 or 80 I.Q. we have reached the border line of serious intellectual retardation. About 5 of every 100 school children have I.Q.'s of 78 or below; about 2 in 100 have I.Q.'s of 73 or below. The latter are the ones whom the White House Conference designates as "mentally retarded to such a degree that they require special education." It will be noted that they include only the extreme cases. It would not be doing violence to the definition of mental retardation if we included in this group those who reach an intelligence quotient of 75 or 80. In other sections of its report, the White House Conference recognizes this fact and stresses for all of these children the importance of individual adjustment to individual needs. The teacher will realize that the question is merely one of degree.

2. HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD?

A very simple device for locating children who are not making satisfactory grade progress is what is called the "age-grade chart." Many teachers are already familiar with this. Children are located on the chart as at-age (normal), over-age (retarded), or under-age (accelerated) according to certain age standards set for each grade. If, for example, 6 to 7 years is considered the normal age for the first grade, then the first-grade child who is 8 years old is about 2 years over-age, depending upon his exact age in years and months and upon the time of year at which the chart is made. The diagram on page 9 will give the teacher a basis for making a study of his own class. It gives the age-grade distribution of a group of 29 children in the first 4 grades of a 2-room rural school at the beginning of the school year. The figures between the heavy black lines represent children who are of normal age for their grades. The figures to the right of and above the black lines show the number of children who are younger than the normal age for the grade; those to the left of and below the black lines show the number who are older than the standard age for the grade.

If the teacher will make such a chart as this for his own class, he can immediately find out how Johnnie and Susie and Mary stand with reference to age standards; and he can use this information in connection with other facts that he knows about them. Suppose Johnnie is doing only fairly well in the second grade. Sometimes there seem to be serious difficulties in the way, but he will probably be carried along with his class. Look him up on your age-grade chart. Here he is in the row of 10-year-olds, far beyond the normal age limits for his grade. He is a little chap, in his physical development not seriously out of place with the second graders. But what about his social adjustment? Have you watched him on the playground to see who his playfellows are? Had you ever stopped to think of his age before and that it has taken him about 4 years to reach second-grade level? What will happen to him in the years to come if he moves along at the same rate?

And here is 12-year-old Susie in the fourth grade. She is a good-natured girl, rather popular with her schoolmates, and faithful in her work. You have thought that she was

"such a nice girl" and somehow the matter of age had escaped your attention. Your chart will show you that she is 3 years over-age for her grade. And here, too, is 13-year-old Mary in the fourth grade, and failing even there. You have always known—or thought you knew—that she was "feeble-minded", but of course she *has* to come to school and you *have* to tolerate her presence.

Chart showing age-grade distribution of children in first 4 grades of rural school

[*Date when made, Sept. 5, 1933*]

NOTE.—Since this chart was made as of September and for a school having no midyear entrants, it represents the first half or "Low" section of the grade. If it were made in February for a school having only yearly promotions and no midyear entrants, the records of pupils would be placed in the second or "High" column under each grade. Each mark placed in a square represents one pupil. See page 8 for further explanation. Such a chart as this can be made for any grade or combination of grades. For grades 5 to 8, the black lines would be extended downward diagonally with the same step-like intervals.

Age (years and months)	Grade								Total
	I		II		III		IV		
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	
5-9 to 6-3	/								1
6-3 to 6-9	///		/						6
6-9 to 7-3	/		/						2
7-3 to 7-9	/		///		/				5
7-9 to 8-3					/				1
8-3 to 8-9			/		////		/		6
8-9 to 9-3							/		1
9-3 to 9-9					/		//		3
9-9 to 10-3									
10-3 to 10-9			/		/				2
10-9 to 11-3									
11-3 to 11-9									
11-9 to 12-3									
12-3 to 12-9							/		1
12-9 to 13-3									
13-3 to 13-9							/		1
Total	8		7		8		6		29
Number accelerated	0		1		1		1		3
Number at age	6		4		5		3		18
Number retarded	2		2		2		2		8
Percent accelerated	0.0		14.3		12.5		16.7		10.3
Percent at age	75.0		57.1		62.5		50.0		62.1
Percent retarded	25.0		28.6		25.0		33.3		27.6

Are these children really mentally retarded to a serious degree—subnormal in their intelligence? No one can tell yet. But at least we have something to start with in our study. We know that they are older than they should be

for the grade—and rather seriously so. The child who is mentally below average is frequently pointed out on this basis—his lack of progress in school. Yet that is by no means always a reliable index. Slow progress in school may be due to physical, emotional, or environmental difficulties. Each of these factors must be carefully investigated before the teacher can be sure that they are not at least contributing causes.

Health and physical condition are of first importance. The steps which the teacher may take to study these are discussed in other pamphlets of this series. The possibilities of defective vision and hearing, serious malnutrition, heart difficulty, and other physical disturbances must first be eliminated. Any one of these alone may make the child seem "dull" or "stupid" in the classroom and may even result in persistent failure, when in reality his mental capacity is all that could be wished for. Are you sure that 10-year-old Johnnie is not suffering from malnutrition which has stunted his mental as well as his physical growth? Is there any indication that Susie or Mary may be suffering from defective hearing or eyesight which has made it impossible for her to follow the work of the class? The search for bodily efficiency and health must always be the initial step in any satisfactory adjustment of the conditions surrounding the child who seems to be retarded.

If serious physical defects are ruled out, then it is much safer to assume that the child who is 3 years or more over age for his grade or who is persistently failing in school work is really mentally retarded to such an extent that some special arrangement should be made for his instruction. However, we dare not rest completely satisfied until we have inquired into his past history, find out how long he has actually gone to school, whether he has had any prolonged absences, and how frequently the family have moved from place to place. If 13-year-old Mary never had an opportunity to go to school until she was 9 years old, the fact that she is in the fourth grade assumes a much less serious aspect. Similarly, if she comes of a migratory family living now here, now there, we need to make ample allowance for that fact.

Nor dare we overlook the present home environment of the child and his own personality as he reacts to that environment and to the school situation. These factors are not so likely to cause repeated school failure with its consequent serious over-ageness as they are to cause failure during a given year, with a given teacher, in specific subjects, or under specific circumstances. Nevertheless, it is important to look into them and make sure that we are not led astray or prejudiced in our estimate of the child's intelligence through our failure to take them into consideration. It is possible that Johnnie, who is 10 years old, may be the youngest child of a doting family in which he has always been shielded and never had any encouragement to grow up. Dependence upon others at home and the pampering which he has received there have not made him take kindly to anything which demands real effort on his part at school. Hence his repeated failure and his willingness to "sit" in the second grade. This, we say, is possible, but it is not often that a healthy youngster of average mentality does not find some challenge in trying to go ahead with children of his own age.

In summarizing the means by which the teacher may recognize the mentally retarded or deficient child in his class, it must be said that there is no one mark of identification which is infallible. Only when a number of facts have been considered together can a reliable judgment be formed, and even with the most careful study and excellent judgment mistakes of estimate sometimes occur. The following questions should be used as a check before the teacher says that he considers any child of subnormal or of seriously retarded mentality:

1. Is he over-age for the grade in which he is working? If so, how much?
2. Is he failing in his school work this term?
3. Are there any health difficulties or physical defects?
4. Does he have any serious personality difficulties that interfere with his success in school? (For example: Is he petulant—of the "spoiled baby" type? Is he excessively reticent and shrinking? Does he have unreasonable fears and anxieties? Is he easily upset emotionally?)

5. Has he attended school regularly since he was 6 or 7 years old?

6. Does the family environment help to encourage a good attitude toward school?

With the child who is seriously retarded in mental growth, "over-ageness" of several years and failure in ordinary school work (as suggested in questions 1 and 2 above) are likely to accompany each other even if all other questions in the list are answered favorably for the child. But if any other single question is answered unfavorably for the child, then neither "over-ageness" nor failure in school work, nor both of these together, should be considered sufficient proof of his mental deficiency without further investigation. Of outstanding assistance in this investigation is the intelligence test if the teacher or someone upon whom he can call is trained to administer it. This is discussed further under the next question.

3. WHAT USE SHOULD BE MADE OF THE INTELLIGENCE TEST?

There are two kinds of so-called "general intelligence tests"—the individual test and the group test. The individual test is given to one child at a time by a teacher or other person who has been specially trained in psychological testing. The group test may be given to a whole class at one time. Although quite different in nature from the individual test, it also needs careful preparation on the part of the examiner in order to secure accurate results. No teacher should attempt to give either of these tests unless he has had a thorough course of training or unless he is working under expert supervision.

The result of the individual mental test is expressed in terms of "mental age." Group tests yield scores which in many cases can be converted into mental age. This mental age shows the level of the child's intellectual ability at the time of the test; and if we divide his mental age by his chronological age at the same date, the result gives us his intelligence quotient. John, for example, is 9 years old. The mental test places his mental age at 7 years. This means that he is able approximately to do the grade of school work expected of a 7-year-old child. His intelligence quotient is

the result of dividing 7 by 9, or 78.[5] This is an index of the rate at which John's mental development has taken place and shows us approximately how rapidly we can expect him to progress in ordinary school assignments. Both these figures—the mental age and the intelligence quotient—are extremely helpful in planning classroom activities, if one understands their significance and their limitations.

If the teacher is prepared to give psychological tests or if he can call upon someone else to do so, then by all means an individual intelligence test should constitute a part of the inquiry made of the child's ability. Without a test there may be an excellent judgment made on the basis of all available facts, but it is still always a *judgment*—a subjective estimate. With a test, we secure an objective measure that either corroborates or places a doubt upon our judgment. If the former, then we are glad to know that in the light of test results our judgment was correct. If the latter, then we are challenged to study further and find out why there is a disagreement. In either case we have the satisfaction of knowing that the best available, even though not a perfect, measure of objective type was used to help us determine the child's level of intelligence.

Look, therefore, for clinical service in your community—in your county—in your State. Teachers are fortunate who have within the local school department someone who has been psychologically trained and whose time can be used for testing. But if this source of help fails, look elsewhere. Health centers in city or county frequently have a psychologist attached to the staff. Child guidance clinics regularly do so. County welfare societies and State organizations interested in children should be helpful. Explore all the possibilities in your own community, in neighboring communities, and in the State as a whole in order to secure a reliable diagnosis of the ability of the child who constitutes a serious problem in your room. But do not depend upon the results of any test which you may have attempted to give yourself unless you have had thorough training in this field. A college course *about* tests is not enough, nor yet a brief series of demonstrations. These only lay the foundation for actual and

[5] Accurately speaking, this would be 0.78, but the decimal point is omitted in expressing intelligence quotients.

adequate practice carefully supervised. Not until one has "graduated" from all of these, with the approval of the instructor to give tests independently, should one presume to administer them. Better no test at all than an unreliable one.

4. ARE THERE ANY TESTS WHICH THE UNTRAINED TEACHER CAN GIVE SATISFACTORILY TO HELP HIM KNOW THE CHILD BETTER?

Yes; provided he is willing to study directions carefully and to follow directions explicitly. These are not intelligence tests, however, and cannot take the place of intelligence tests in the study of the exceptional child. They do not furnish an intelligence quotient, which as has been said, is an index of the child's approximate capacity to progress in his school work. They give only a measure of what the child has actually achieved in reading or arithmetic or spelling or any other subject. For this reason they are called "achievement tests." Because most children do school work which in quality is fairly close to their capacity to achieve, the results of achievement tests and intelligence tests in general agree quite closely. But the exceptional child is often the exception in this respect also. For him the achievement test is valuable because it shows what he *has* done, but the intelligence test is also needed because it shows what he *can* do. Both tests together *plus* the teacher's judgment of his ability *plus* a consideration of all the other items listed in the questions on pages 11 and 12 will give the best possible basis for knowing whether he is seriously retarded in his mental development.[6]

5. CAN THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD BE EDUCATED?

Now that we have defined the mentally retarded child and have outlined a method of studying his possibilities, we turn to his education. Can he really be educated? The person who still insists that education is the same thing for all and means academic achievement in a standard elementary and high-school course will have to say "No." But most of us have progressed beyond that notion. We have grown away

[6] Any teacher who would like specific help or suggestions in the selection and the use of standardized achievement tests and who has no one in his own school system to look to for advice is invited to write to the U.S. Office of Education, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. State your problem concretely—particularly the ages and grades of the children to be tested, as well as your purpose in giving the tests. Service will be gladly given so far as it is possible to do so.

from the delusion that every child must be like every other child, and equally able to master the same type of school problems. We have begun to realize that capacity for training is not synonymous with capacity for learning reading, writing, and arithmetic. Human differences in learning power have always prevailed and always will prevail. It would be a sorry world indeed if we were all shaped in the same mold. Our task is to recognize this fact understandingly for ourselves and for our classes, seeking out the things which Johnnie and Mary and Susie *can* do and bringing them out into bold relief.

We no longer think it a disgrace that Joe does not learn arithmetic as well as John any more than it is a disgrace for Peter not to be able to make a kite or to handle a hammer as well as Paul. The wise and skillful teacher knows the child's weaknesses, but he knows also his strengths. He knows that education is not limited to book learning. He knows that it consists rather of the development of those capacities which the child possesses—whether they be academic or manual or social or musical or of any other type—to the end that he may live happily as a social being in a social world. Each child will thus be held responsible for the greatest use of that ability which he does possess and it is our privilege and responsibility to help him to reach that goal. *If this is education, then the mentally retarded child can be educated.*

6. SHOULD ALL MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN BE EDUCATED IN THE PUBLIC DAY SCHOOLS?

No. The lowest cases of mental deficiency never reach the public school, for they are essentially incapable of learning. Others, of higher intelligence but still seriously subnormal, show clearly that they cannot adjust to the group life of the classroom. Sometimes there are complications of behavior or of temperament that demand institutional care. Sometimes there are home conditions which make it unwise to keep the child of low mental ability at home.

Such cases as these should find room in State or private institutions.[7] But they constitute only a small percentage of the total number. It is generally agreed by careful students of the problem that 90 percent of mentally deficient children should be recognized and provided for by the community

[7] All but 3 States (Arizona, Arkansas, and Nevada) now have one or more separate State institutions for the mentally deficient.

through the school program; and that State residential schools should be reserved for the most urgent cases demanding segregation. The majority, properly provided for in the public day schools of the State, would thus have the advantage of living in a normal environment, of developing social attitudes toward home and community life, and of learning to make some contribution, however small, to the activities of citizenship.

If this be the accepted policy, then only the child who is so seriously deficient that he cannot work with reasonable self-control and self-care as a member of a class group should be regarded by the teacher as mentally ineligible for day-school instruction. For all others some constructive program may be planned—either in a special group or as members of the regular class. After all, if only 2 in 100 school children have I.Q.'s of 73 or below, and only 5 in 100 have I.Q.'s of 78 or below, the number of these children to be found in a rural or small urban school will under ordinary circumstances be very small indeed. No less urgent, however, is the need for the teacher to be adequately prepared to take care of those that do appear.

7. DO ALL MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN NECESSARILY BECOME DEPENDENT UPON SOCIETY FOR SUPPORT?

No. In the first place there are, as has already been said, many different degrees of mental retardation. There is no distinct species of mentally retarded children set off from the rest of mankind, but each level of ability shades imperceptibly into the ones above and below it. Those of the highest grade are quite able, with more or less supervision, to fit into their corner of community life. Those of the very lowest grade are unable even to care for their own bodily needs.

In the second place, the intelligence quotient of a child is not the all-determining factor with regard to his social or vocational capacity. While it is true that extremely low cases will inevitably become public or family charges, among the higher grades there is no one point below which it may be said that all are incapable of self-support. There are too many other factors that enter into the situation. Personal and social traits differ among the mentally retarded just as they do among the rest of the population. A pleasant manner,

well-ordered habits of industry and persistence, care of one's personal appearance, ability and willingness to work with one's hands, ability to get along with people are all exceedingly important in helping the mentally retarded child to make his way in the world. So much the more urgent it is to develop such traits in him while he is still young in order that they may become an inseparable part of his personal equipment as he grows older.

Herbert and James had identical intelligence quotients, indicating serious mental retardation though not of extremely low grade. Herbert lived in a family in which every attention was given to his physical and social development. In school he was enrolled in a special class in which the emphasis was placed upon socialized experiences and manual activities, with opportunities also to develop skill in reading, number work, and other fundamental academic subjects insofar as these were within his grasp. At the age of 13 he was transferred to a school in which he was prepared for vocational activity of his own preference. He chose shoe repairing, and he is now, with a certain amount of supervision, earning an independent though modest livelihood at his trade.

James, on the other hand, grew up without any special help or guidance. His family failed to appreciate his needs and the school failed to provide for them. He developed habits of truancy because there was nothing in school that interested him. Then he developed habits of staying away from home because there was no one at home who paid much attention to him. A boy who habitually roams the streets is likely to get into trouble. James did. And at the age of 14 he had a police record on several minor charges. Social agencies took up his case. His mental deficiency was established through a careful examination; and he was sent to the State school for the feeble-minded. Here the attempt has been made to give him constructive training, but with so late a beginning it was much more difficult for him to make the needed adjustments. He is still in the State institution, doing odd jobs about the place, and will probably always be dependent upon society for his support.

8. IS THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD A POTENTIAL CRIMINAL?

Every child is a potential criminal, if by that we mean that there is a possibility of his committing a crime at some time

during his life. Whether he does or not depends upon many factors besides intelligence. There are "good" and "bad" children among the mentally deficient just as there are "good" and "bad" children among the average and the bright. The feeble-minded may get into trouble partially because they are easily led by unscrupulous companions and do not appreciate the significance of their actions. But just as serious in its effect upon them is the repression or complex of failure which has confronted them most of their lives. If our home and school treatment of retarded pupils were more suited to their capacity and their needs, we should find less delinquency among them. Doctor Fernald, late superintendent of one of the Massachusetts State schools and distinguished for his leadership in the education of the feeble-minded, said, regarding the mentally deficient child who presents problems of behavior:

> Let him achieve success every day. His bad behavior is largely his attempt to compensate for a feeling of inferiority from repeated failures. He has failed so often that he expects to fail. His social attitude and behavior largely express his clumsy attempts to keep his own self-respect; in other words, a simple defense reaction.

Instead of building up habits of failure and of revolt against authority, we need to build up habits of satisfying success and of happiness. Someone has said that the contented man never becomes a criminal. Open up the way to true contentment for the retarded child and his potentiality for a criminal career will be small indeed.

9. WHAT IS THE FIRST TASK WHICH CONFRONTS THE TEACHER OF A MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD?

Be interested in him. Know him. Like him. Find something in him that is worthy of appreciation. No one can teach the retarded child successfully with an attitude of distaste or aversion. A genuine eagerness to help without a great amount of special training will accomplish far more than a technical knowledge of instructional methods without a human interest in the child. Find out not only what he *can* do, but what he *likes* to do. Know something about his home life, his companions, his play, his feelings, his thoughts. Let him feel that you are his friend—not his critic and oppressor.

Your own attitude will to a large extent determine also the attitude of other children toward him. Any disparaging reference to him as "feeble-minded", "dumbbell", or in similar terms, is not likely to occur if from the very beginning a wholesome group consciousness is built up in which every member of the class or school is respected for his own personality and his own possibilities. Let each child realize that the people in this world are all different; that some can do one thing well, others another; and that all must be given an equal chance to develop whatever gifts they have. Encourage the spirit of appreciation and of helpfulness to the retarded child rather than one of condescension or of ridicule of his limitations.

William was a silent, overgrown boy of 13 years. In the small rural school which he attended he was floundering hopelessly in his work. Others moved ahead from grade to grade, while he stayed behind. A new teacher came to the school. He saw William's difficulty and gave him hours of individual help, but to no avail. The boy's efforts were sincere, but, try as he would, he could not keep up even with children who were younger than he. So he settled back in a corner of the room in hopeless discouragement and despair that were beginning to be tinged with bitterness and revolt against the whole social order of the school. Other children had little to do with him, and he was a lonely figure indeed. One day the teacher proposed a day's outing. Where should they go? Someone suggested "Squirrel's Nest" in the hills to the east. At the sound of the name William sat up in his seat and listened intently. Did anyone know the way? No one was sure that he did—at least no one but William, and he was afraid to say so. But the teacher noted his interest in the discussion and asked him if he knew anything about "Squirrel's Nest". At first slowly and laboriously, then with increasing enthusiasm, yet still haltingly, he told them all about it—that it was one of his favorite haunts, how they could reach it, and what they would find there. The teacher saw his opportunity and suggested that William be their guide on this occasion. On the appointed day they started out with William as their leader. A new pride took hold of him. As they tramped along, he showed such an intimate knowledge of the trails

that the younger children began to look upon him with real admiration. He became the hero of the day, because he knew so much about the woods and the hills.

That was the beginning of a new era for William, not because he could do his school work any better, but because there was something which he could do better than anyone else. His teacher had found the way to make the other children appreciate him, and he capitalized his interest in the great outdoors in planning the school activities. There was a change in the boy. He held his head up higher, he walked straighter, he no longer sat in the corner alone and dejected. An intelligence test was given and indicated an I.Q. of 73, so it was not surprising that he was unable to do the school work expected of children of his age. But his teacher was wise enough not to expect it and yet to make a place for William in the class group as a contributing member of the "family".

10. WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE EDUCATION OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN?

There can be no plan of education without a statement of objectives. We must know where we are going before we decide which road to take. We must have in our minds a clear conception of the ultimate purpose of our work and then plan the concrete means of realizing that purpose. This is true not only of education in general, but specifically of the education of children of subnormal intellect. What then is the goal set for the education of this type of pupil?

Happiness is the first right of every child, and whatever contributes to the genuine happiness of the retarded pupil contributes to his education. Whatever causes him to become discouraged, discontented, sullen, or rebellious makes for trouble. Thus tasks that are beyond his ability, however worth while in themselves, have no place in his educational program. He needs activity that is both interesting to him and possible for him, and that will give him the satisfaction of success. He needs social contacts that will satisfy his craving for companionship and give him the feeling of "belonging". He needs a love and a sympathy that will make him confident of real friendship. The *present happiness of the child* is the immediate object of our quest as we plan his school work.

But because we must look ahead to the years when the child of today becomes the man of the future, present happiness must also lay the foundation for future welfare—welfare both of the individual and of society. *A person who is physically fit, socially and morally minded, industrially capable of even the simplest job, able to give expression to whatever talents he may possess, and withal of a contented spirit* is the vision we need to have for the retarded child grown up. Even with the poorest grade of academic achievement, if he has these qualifications, there is little likelihood in ordinary economic conditions of his becoming a menace or even a total liability to his community.

11. HOW DO THESE OBJECTIVES AFFECT THE CURRICULUM FOR RETARDED CHILDREN?

Physical fitness necessitates a knowledge of and practice in health habits as well as a physical training which will help the body to function at its maximum efficiency. Teach the child first of all (if he needs this elementary instruction) to form habits of cleanliness, to wash himself, to tie his shoestrings and his necktie, to brush his teeth, to use his handkerchief. A bathroom—or at least a wash basin—is a very valuable part of the equipment of a special classroom. It will increase the child's self-respect to feel and to look clean and neat; it will give him a sense of power to be able to comb his hair or to polish his shoes.

Children of seriously retarded mental development show a higher percentage of physical defects and infirmities than do normal children. A lack of motor control sometimes causes them to walk with a shuffling gait and to be clumsy in all their movements. Medical attention to remove defects, games and drills to improve posture and muscular coordination, projects to encourage the observance of health rules, the weaving of health education into every part of the curriculum constitute the foundation upon which physical fitness is built.

Social and moral mindedness is a matter of attitudes and habits, and especially with the subnormal child attitudes and habits cannot be built up except through daily experience in living and doing. The slow learner does not grasp abstractions readily. He needs to have repeated opportunity to

live out the principle and to see the results of its application in specific instances. With him the act, repeated over and over again, is indispensable in establishing social consciousness and moral ideals. The ability to live with others, right attitudes toward law observance, thrift, honorable standards of personal and business relationships are preeminent in planning for his education. The person who has not gained a certain amount of social adaptation, regardless of his other assets, is sure to fail; but if he is properly adjusted socially, then he is more likely to acquire other qualities making for good citizenship.

Teach the child to say "Good morning", "Thank you", "If you please", to shake hands, and to exhibit other ordinary forms of courtesy. A clean appearance and courteous, pleasant manner will go far in making him appear like other children. Beyond this, there are habits of fair play, honesty, self-reliance, cooperation, and other traits that are fundamental and that can be taught only by using or creating actual situations which bring them to the foreground. To solve in a practical way the simpler problems of behavior and human relationships is not beyond the ability of most retarded children in our schools, weak as they may be in the more abstract types of reasoning.

Industrial capability presupposes some manual skill. It is here that the mentally deficient child offers the greatest possibility for training for self-support and the maintenance of a home. If he earns his own living, it will probably be through the use of his hands. He is, as someone has said, *thing-minded* rather than *thought-minded.* While even in this sphere there are heights to which he may not aspire, as, for example, in some types of expert mechanics, yet there are in many trades certain routine jobs for which he can be trained satisfactorily, provided he has acquired the proper social adjustment. This is equally true for boys and for girls. They both face in addition the responsibilities of the homemaker, for which definite preparation should be provided. Hence the need of emphasizing during the school days of retarded children muscular coordination, manual dexterity, and practical activities.

It is customary in well-organized programs of special education to give a considerable portion of the day to manual

activities. From the simplest types of hand work, such as stringing beads, building blocks, sewing cards, and cutting paper, the child is guided from one level to another until he is introduced to the more elementary forms of industrial work and to the responsibilities involved in the maintenance of the home. Even the simplest accomplishment, such as making a red box or cutting out a yellow flower, will give the thrill of creative success. To reach the higher levels of manual work some knowledge of arithmetic and of reading is practically indispensable. Elementary instruction in these subjects is thus a very important part of the training of the retarded child and is to be limited only by the use which he can make of them.

The expression of one's talents in creative activity is a source of joy to any one of us. Because mentally retarded children are deficient in that which we have chosen to call "general intelligence", it does not necessarily follow that they possess no unique abilities which deserve to be developed to their peak. William's peculiar strength lay in his intimacy with the woods and the hills. Another child may have real skill in some types of drawing. Another may be endowed with a good singing voice. Still another may be a good custodian of classroom properties, with a propensity for vigilance and orderliness. While none of these children may reach the heights attained by those who have both the specific talent and high general intelligence, that ability which they do have nevertheless supplies the foundation for real creative experiences and for contribution to the pleasure of others. The teacher who seeks for and who uses any interest or talent peculiar to a mentally retarded child in his class will be employing one of the greatest opportunities at his command for enriching the experiences of the child's life.

Contentment involves all that has gone before and more besides. It means more than health, the ability to get and to hold a job, to keep out of trouble, or even to express one's talents. These are important considerations, but retarded boys and girls, like the rest of us, need the wherewithal to feed the soul as well as to develop the body and the mind. They have in their limited way the power to appreciate spiritual experiences. Emotional satisfactions need be no stranger to them, if they have an understanding

guide to direct their thought. They need to know how to fill their leisure hours with satisfying experiences of work or play, of contacts with the out-door world, of music, and of social intercourse. Every child should have the opportunity to enjoy these things insofar as his capacity permits him to do so, for they will make life just so much more satisfying to him. Academic, manual, social, and cultural subjects all constitute media through which these experiences come.

It will be seen, therefore, that in general mentally retarded children need the same basic types of educational activities as do normal children, but with a shift in emphasis and in method consistent with their peculiar needs. The fundamental ideal is the same for all children—to help each one to express himself constructively and to live on a plane which is commensurate with his own capacity.

12. SHOULD MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN FOLLOW THE REGULAR COURSE OF STUDY, BUT AT A SLOWER PACE THAN NORMAL CHILDREN?

Mentally retarded children have a right to as much of the regular course of study as they can profit by, but not at the expense of other instruction which will mean far more to them. Suppose Jack is just 13 years old. An intelligence test shows that he has an intelligence quotient of 66. Then Jack's mental age is 66 percent of 13, or about 8 years. This means that in academic work he can do approximately what is expected of 8-year-old children. But at the same time he has had 13 years of life experience, is reaching physical maturity, and is beginning to experience the emotional changes of the adolescent. Obviously he needs not the regular course of study in smaller doses, but something different—something which will be simple enough for him to grasp with his limited mentality, yet which will be in keeping with the ordinary physical, emotional, and social development of the 13-year-old. To be kept only at the "babyish" activities of the second or third grade until he masters the principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic involved in them will do more harm than good. For it means that he would never go beyond third- or fourth-grade work, and would leave school empty handed so far as any real preparation for adult life is concerned. The inefficiency and possible dependency and crime which follow in many

cases have their roots in this very attempt to force the boy to absorb a standard course of study in the face of an obvious mental handicap. The course of study is only a means to an end, and if in certain cases it proves to be not the proper means, let us not hesitate to relegate it to the background and seek out the better method by which the boy and the girl can be led into respected and self-respecting citizenship.

13. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF METHOD IN TEACHING RETARDED CHILDREN?

Throughout the education of retarded children it must be remembered that the more concrete the work and the more interested the pupil, the greater chance there is for him to profit by the activities of the classroom. The presentation of general principles avails little, for the subnormal child does not think in terms of generalities. He learns essentially by doing. In correct and useful habits of behavior, whether in the processes of arithmetic or in conduct, lies the greatest hope for his education.

The fundamental processes of arithmetic can be taught best by using them not in problems giving imaginary situations but in simple applications to the life of the child. These will be most likely to arouse his interest and his effort. Play money used for budgeting, a play store for shopping, a play bank for depositing and withdrawing money are among devices which offer possibilities for teaching number concepts. Such activities carried on day after day will help to establish habits in the use of money which will be of value to the child as he grows older.

If a child is capable of reading for enjoyment and recreation, by all means let him have that opportunity. Most subnormal children, however, rarely read books for pleasure after they leave school, but there are certain types of reading which they should be able to handle in practical life problems. Create reading needs through the introduction of these problems. The "want ads" in the newspaper, advertisements of food and clothing, news items of interest, the names of streets and signs used in the community are likely to function in their lives much more than books or magazines of fiction or history. Games and drills and projects utilizing these local reading requirements can be devised by the teacher

for daily use. They can be correlated with the work in social science, which for the subnormal child should stress the life and the geography of the local community. They can be correlated with health projects, which should consider personal habits, home habits, and community facilities. They can be correlated with manual activities through the construction of miniature cities and towns, or of articles for the home and for the school.

From the study of the life of the local community, there are possibilities of carrying older children on to an appreciation of the larger community, the State, the Nation, the world. But always concrete illustrations and hand work are needed to bring the lesson home. Merely reading—or attempting to read—about them will not suffice. Rather let the children make their own readers, printing or writing brief sentences or paragraphs accompanied by pictures on a subject which the teacher has discussed with them. This will mean far more to them than laboring over a book which is beyond their comprehension or one which bores them because of its infantile content.

Some of the signs that provide practical reading and discussion material

DANGER	HANDS OFF	PRIVATE
DO NOT SPIT ON THE FLOOR	HELP WANTED	PULL
DO NOT TALK TO THE MOTORMAN	KEEP OFF	PUSH
ELEVATOR	KEEP OUT	QUIET ZONE
EXIT	KEEP TO THE RIGHT	RAILROAD CROSSING
FIRE ALARM	NO LEFT TURN	STOP
FIRE ESCAPE	NO SMOKING	THIS SIDE UP
FIRE EXTINGUISHER	NO TRESPASSING	THIS WAY OUT
FOR RENT	NO U TURN	TICKET OFFICE
GO	ONE WAY STREET	WET PAINT
HANDLE WITH CARE	OUT OF ORDER	
	PAY AS YOU ENTER	
	POISON	

Music, physical education and health, dramatics, language, and nature study must all follow the same general procedure, with an abundance of illustration, repetition, and hand activity accompanying the work at every step of the way. It is impossible here to go into detail with reference to each one of these subjects. The following "ten commandments" for

teaching mentally retarded children will summarize the major principles:

(1) Begin where the child is—in his abilities and in his interests. Get down to his level of academic achievement but remember that he is usually far beyond that in physical and social maturity. Plan his work accordingly.

(2) Use abundant praise and encouragement even for small successes. Remember that "Nothing succeeds like success."

(3) Use much repetition and drill in teaching fundamental processes, but make such periods short and dynamic. The retarded child learns primarily through habit formation. He is most seriously lacking in abstract reasoning capacity.

(4) Use much concrete application—object lessons, pictures, games, visual instruction, and manual activities fitting into the child's own life and stimulating his interest.

(5) Don't limit yourself to the use of a single reading method. If one does not succeed, try another. Word, phrase, and sentence recognition, alphabet and phonics all have their place in teaching the retarded child. Visual aids, action, and story playing are of great value in helping him to recognize language symbols.

(6) Use an abundance of simple number work in problems understood and appreciated by the child. Stress accuracy rather than speed.

(7) Give consistent training in the use of the large muscles. Emphasize good posture, physical coordination, and health habits. Make these an integral part of a carefully planned activity and play program.

(8) Capitalize music, art, nature study, and dramatics as media of expression and at the same time for enriching the child's experience and encouraging his creative ability. Rhythm, color, activity, and growth of living things have an appeal to the child which no book work can touch.

(9) Teach citizenship, thrift, and conduct through classroom situations, through stories and hero worship, through the repetition of activities that represent good citizenship in a miniature community. Provide abundant opportunity for the child to exercise practical judgment in common life situations.

(10) Let the manual work which is done stimulate creative activity. Let it be an outgrowth of the life needs and interests

of the child. Tie it up with home making, with farm activities, with the industry of the city, or with some other center of interest adopted for development in the class. Above all, avoid making it mere "busy work", designed to keep the child out of mischief and nothing more.

14. WHAT SPECIFIC PROVISION CAN BE MADE FOR THE RETARDED CHILD WITHIN A REGULAR CLASS?

One teacher of a 1-room rural school answered this question by making the mentally deficient child a "family problem" in his group. "In his case the weaving of rag rugs seemed a desirable occupation, but he had no work table, loom, or materials. After class discussion as to the ways and means of helping X to get these things, it was decided that the older boys should make a table and simple loom as part of their manual work. Other pupils brought rags to school. They helped to tear, sew, and dye them. They studied methods of weaving, created designs that X could use, and took a great interest in helping him. Due to the way in which this teacher handled the problem, X became a socializing agent in that class instead of a drag."[8] In other words he was one of the means of evoking a fine, helpful class spirit, and was at the same time receiving training in something which his limited mentality made it possible for him to achieve.

The teacher of the 1-room rural school can thus make of her class a true "opportunity" group. Here children of various ages and grade achievements are gathered together, and instruction must of necessity be planned for individual needs. With such a program the teacher can permit each member of the group to proceed at his own pace in fundamentals while at the same time working with the group in social subjects. Eleven-year-old Johnnie, who has not yet learned to read or to do simple number work, may have his social contacts with boys and girls of his own age, sing with the whole group, take part as he can in the class projects, and get his primary instruction in word recognition and number work individually or with a small group of similar attainment. On the other hand, 10-year-old Joe, who is forging ahead in all his work, may well use some of his spare time as the teacher's assistant in helping Johnnie.

[8] Reported by Hilda M. Holmes, State Teachers College, San Francisco, Calif.

With the increase in the size of the school, there is a consequent decrease in the number of different grades which the teacher must handle. But the principle remains the same that the instruction of the mentally retarded child can be made an integral part of the class program if the teacher centers activities about *children* and not about *subjects*. The "teaching unit" or "activity unit," which is today coming to the foreground and which might be considered as a "project grown up", offers unlimited opportunities for doing this very thing. If the class is studying transportation, or foods, or communication, or dwellings, or gardens, the retarded child can always make his contribution to the group. He can help in the building or in other manual work, he can take part in some of the class discussions, he can join in some of the musical or dramatic performances, he can accompany the group on their excursions. All of these will be for him an incentive to redouble his efforts in learning to read about the things in which his interest has been aroused, to make accurate measurements of the article he is constructing, to figure correctly his carfare, the cost of eggs, the telephone bill, the price of garden seeds, or general household expenses. The teacher who must handle all degrees of intelligence together, perhaps ranging from the child of 50 or 60 I.Q. to one of 120 or 130 I.Q., will find in the activity unit, centering about one large theme, one of the best means for integrating the class group, correlating various subject matters and providing for individual differences in ability.[9]

15. WHAT IS A DESIRABLE PROGRAM FOR A SPECIAL CLASS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN?

Even at its best, the class program which must provide for the mentally deficient child in the same group with the mentally superior child is usually not the most desirable plan for either pupil or teacher. Much more satisfactory conditions may obtain if seriously retarded children can be gathered together into a separate class assigned to an understanding teacher. Then there is every possibility of centering the class work about the needs of this particular level of intelligence. Activity units again constitute one of the most

[9] The Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, is now publishing a series of teachers' lesson units which are available in pamphlet form at nominal prices.

interest-provoking means toward this end, for the children's actual experiences become the basis upon which the curriculum is built. With such a plan the various subjects are not isolated or assigned to separate compartments of the day, but an integrated unit of work is evolved which includes all subjects and makes each one contribute a vital share to the whole experience.[10]

Such a procedure calls for skill on the part of the teacher, for he must make a place in the activity for teaching each of the fundamental processes with which the pupils should be familiar. Play and constructive work must not be permitted to usurp the children's time or to result in license and unorganized activity. When the program is carefully planned and the time is properly apportioned, then the mastery of desirable elementary skills will become one of the definite objectives for which provision is made. If, for example, the class is studying and constructing a miniature community modeled after their own, then the material used for practice in arithmetic can be found in the number of grocery stores, or the measurement of buildings, or the cost of construction, or any one of the other innumerable items encountered in the community. Reading material can be drawn from the same source, including much which the children compose themselves. Language and composition can be based upon the life and work in the community. Social studies and citizenship are the very keynote of the whole activity. Music can draw its inspiration from a "community sing" or other event. Art is used for community beautification. Nature offers abundant material for contemplation everywhere. The work in all these subjects should be suited to the mental level of the children in the class, and the day's program planned on the basis of their special needs.

16. SHOULD THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD BE PROMOTED?

If we mean by promotion the completion of the standard work of one grade and readiness to advance to the next grade, then obviously the retarded child will fail of promotion. But if we accept the newer and more progressive meaning of the term as advancement from one unit of work

[10] See U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin, 1933, no. 7, on Group Activities for Mentally Retarded Children. This is a symposium of activities found successful and described by special class teachers. Available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.

(not necessarily a whole grade) to the next unit on the basis of effort put forth, plus some semblance of achievement, then most retarded children earn their right to promotion. It is rare indeed that the subnormal child does not show some fruit of his effort if the teaching has been of the right type.

Does this mean that a retarded child should be passed on from grade to grade without meeting requirements as other children do? Happily, if a special class has been organized, this question need not be answered. In such cases there will be no passing or failing, but simply progress from one year to the next. And even if the child is working in a regular grade, here too standards of promotion are becoming less rigid, being made subservient to the best interests of the children concerned. The question to be answered for every child, when the problem of promotion arises, is: Will he as an individual profit more by being held in the same grade or by being permitted to work with the children in the next higher grade? In answering this question, consider the best development of the whole child rather than any single part of his equipment.

In those localities in which the county examination as an arbitrary requirement still stares teacher and pupil in the face at the end of the term, the teacher can only hope and work for a special dispensation for 12-year-old John and 13-year-old Jane, who have the ability of a child of 8 or 9 years, yet whose physical development cries out for consideration in grade placement. Their cases should be studied individually on the basis of their greatest welfare and happiness. If that welfare and happiness demand that they work with children of approximately their own age, then by all means let them work there, even if the grade designation must be withheld from their records. If, on the other hand, they are profiting more from being in a class with younger children, then that is the place for them. In any case, remember that the school was made for the child, not the child for the school.

17. WHAT VOCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES ARE OPEN TO MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN?

"It is only when the type of child and the type of training coincide that the mechanism can run smoothly." There are

many varieties of the world's work, each of them honorable and satisfying. If the work fits the boy or the girl, whether it be that of a day laborer, a tradesman, a skilled operator, or a physician, there will be every prospect of happiness and success.

Phyllis Blanchard, one of the leading child psychologists of the country, tells of a boy of 16 years who one day walked into the mental hygiene clinic and announced that he had come "to have his brains examined." He wanted to find out why he could not pass his Latin course in the first year of high school. He wished to study medicine. His mother had planned that he should be a doctor and it was a matter of family pride that he should enter that profession. An intelligence test was given him, which indicated that he had the approximate capacity required to complete the usual academic requirements of the eighth grade. Sheer perseverance and effort had enabled him to reach the high school at the age of 16, but he was meeting his Waterloo in the college preparatory course which he was endeavoring to follow there.

While this boy had an intellectual capacity somewhat higher than that which we are considering in this discussion, yet his case illustrates well the problem of family tradition versus the boy's own happiness and success. There is no more serious mistake that a parent can make in planning a child's future than to fail to realize that the child himself is the all-important factor in making those plans. His abilities point the way. Whatever direction they may take, the parents must prepare themselves to accept the situation not only as inevitable but as desirable, because through it the child will find that vocational sphere in which he can be happy and successful.

Teachers are sometimes called into consultation on these problems of vocational choice, and they often need to work tactfully with parents to bring about a willingness to understand and to accept Johnnie's and Annie's and Helen's limitations. But they themselves also need to be convinced of the worth-while character of the occupations in which Johnnie and Annie and Helen can work with a reasonable assurance of success if they have been properly trained during their school days.

Cases are known in which a child of low general intelligence has some specialized talent that actually brings him more income than many of his more intellectual companions receive. A boy of 16 was an utter failure in school work, but he showed great skill in drawing cartoons, and before many years he was earning more money than the instructor who had despaired of ever teaching him anything. But even if there is no such talent to be developed, there are still many fields in which the retarded child may become self-supporting. Girls as well as boys find openings suited to their capacities. One school, for retarded girls only, has reported the following among the types of positions held by its graduates:

	Weekly wages
Power operating, dressmaking, tailoring	$8 to $15
Factory work: Candy and biscuits, leather goods, auto accessories, etc.	8 to 12
Domestic work: As waitress, nurse maid	3.50 to 5
Work in laundry, cleaning and dyeing plants, hairdressing parlors	6 to 20
Store work: Clerking, parceling, filing, labeling, etc.	8 to 11

Boys who had attended special classes in one of our large cities were found in the following occupations: Factory work, messenger service, railroad labor, apprenticeships in building trades, auto repair, bus and truck driving, foundry work, minor jobs in bakeries, tailors' establishments, and stores. In rural districts there are the additional outlets of the farm, the orchard, the truck garden, the dairy, and other agricultural pursuits.

The teacher who studies the local opportunities for employment within the reach of mentally retarded children and then does his utmost to give the pupil training in habits and skills needed as a basis for such employment will be helping to build self-supporting manhood and womanhood. There will always be some who have insufficient intelligence and stability to care for themselves in the world safely. These should, of course, be taken care of by the State. But the large majority offer a challenge to teachers to find out what they can do best. Trained in habits of neatness, courtesy, punctuality, honesty, stability, willingness to work, and reasonable skill in elementary processes and in handling tools, they can in ordinary times go out equipped to face the world unashamed and unafraid. In the present economic situation

the outlook is less promising. Yet the individual who has been thus prepared will always have a better chance of employment than his untrained or neglected fellow.

18. HOW CAN I HELP PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE CHILD'S LIMITATIONS?

There are two ways of imparting a bit of bad news. One is by using cold outspoken frankness. The other is by tempering one's words with kindness and with a sympathetic appreciation of what they will mean to the person receiving them.

So long as parents are parents, any serious reflection upon the mentality of their children will be a grievous shock. That is but natural. My responsibility, as Johnnie's teacher, is so to discuss the situation with father and mother that the worst sting will be taken out of it. I might say: "Well, there's no use. Johnnie can't learn as other children do. The tests show that he is feeble-minded. He is 12 years old, only in the fourth grade, and failing even there. I am afraid he will never be able to finish school." But I might also say: "You know, Mrs. A, no two children are alike. Some can do one thing well, and others can do something else. They don't all find ordinary school work easy, and I would advise you not to try to force Johnnie too much. Yes, he is backward in some things, I know, but I know, too, that he is trying hard, and we'll help him all we can. See how well he made this box; and he is so interested in using tools. I'm sure he will make good progress in that kind of work. He will be a happier boy and a better citizen if we find out the things he can do best and help him to make good with them; etc., etc."

A frank recognition of Johnnie's backwardness in academic work, but no mention of test results; an expression of sincere eagerness to help him to the best of one's ability; an emphasis upon his good qualities and upon *something* (however trifling) that he can do reasonably well; an appeal to the parent's desire to have his boy make good as a citizen; and some statement of the differences existing among children and of the importance of the right kind of education for citizenship—these will go far in securing a cooperative attitude and at least an elementary understanding of the situation.

19. HOW CAN THE TEACHER SECURE A FAVORABLE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF PARENTS TOWARD A SPECIAL CLASS?

Billy was failing in his school work. He "hated school", and often started away from home in the morning only after a scene of stormy protest and weeping. One day there came to his mother a request to call at the school. She was told that a careful study had been made of Billy's problem and that it was thought best to place him in a special class where he would receive individual help and be permitted to progress as rapidly as he was able to do. His mother was indignant, charging the school with classifying her child as "feeble-minded" and unalterably opposing any transfer to a special class.

After careful explanation of the nature and purpose of the special class she was prevailed upon to permit Billy to try it out for 2 months. If at the end of that time she was still insistent upon his return to the regular grades, the school would see what it could do. At the end of the designated time she came to the school again, not to demand a transfer back to the regular class, but to tell the principal of the school what a changed boy Billy was. Instead of being forced to go to school, he was ready each morning to start out with a smile. Instead of the resentfulness which had marked his previous attitude, he was happy in the tasks assigned him and went home at the end of the day eager to tell his mother what he had been doing at school. Needless to say, Billy was left in the special class, for his mother was sensible enough to realize that the child's happiness and success were far more vital than any foolish attempt to force him to conform to the achievements of other boys and girls of his own age.

The secret of securing cooperation from parents lies on the one hand in the kindliness and understanding with which the teacher develops a personal relationship with both pupil and parents; on the other hand, it lies in the skill with which he plans his classroom work and leads the child to the joy of accomplishment. The parent who sees his child happy and successful in some worthwhile task is likely to be won over to the program of the school.

Not only the teacher of a special class for retarded children, but other teachers in the school also have a responsibility

in this matter. Mabel was a big girl of 11 years in the third grade. She had just recently come to a new school, and it did not take long for the teacher to diagnose her as a "dumbbell." Nor did she hesitate to discuss the child's shortcomings with other teachers in the halls, not even assuring herself first that there were no children within hearing. In her own classroom she actually used the special class as a threat hanging over the heads of children who were dilatory or slow. What effect do you suppose all this would have upon Mabel and upon Mabel's parents? And what will be their reaction if the time comes when Mabel is assigned to the special class?

Teachers and principals themselves are largely responsible for the attitude which parents and pupils assume toward the special class within a school. If they consider it a dumping ground for useless material, parents and pupils will fight to the end any assignment made to it. But if they put it in its proper place as a contributing factor in the school program, designed to release and to develop human capacities of infinite worth, their attitude will be contagious and parents and pupils alike will look upon it in the same way. With specially assigned responsibilities as monitors, as custodians of the mid-morning lunch, as junior traffic officers, as assistants in repair work, as participants in a school assembly, as ushers at an entertainment, as hosts and hostesses at a luncheon, the boys and girls in these classes can be elevated to positions of dignity and self-respect that will win the admiration and sometimes even the envy of other children in the school. We have known instances in which parents have actually requested to have a child placed in the special class, because "they did so many worth-while things there."

20. WHERE CAN THE TEACHER SECURE HELPFUL MATERIALS?

The equipment and supplies to be used with mentally retarded children vary with the age and capacities of the pupils, and with the character of the classroom activities under way. Some types of apparatus, such as work benches, sewing machines, cooking equipment, and looms, can be supplied only through an interested board of education that is willing to furnish the needed funds. The ingenious teacher, however, can utilize many materials which may be secured either free of charge or at little cost. The merchants of

any community will cooperate to the extent of furnishing empty boxes (soap, match, shoe, cigar, dry goods, fruit) and will often contribute odds and ends of merchandise. Scrap ends of wood can usually be secured in lumber yards or from builders. Sample packages of foods and other merchandise are frequently distributed. Posters, sales announcements, handbills and newspaper advertisements furnish practical reading material. Local chambers of commerce, as well as those of other cities, often supply maps and descriptive literature.

The extent to which salvaged material can be utilized is illustrated by the following excerpt taken from the recent report of a school for maladjusted boys:[11]

Salvaged material as a source of shop supplies.—During a depression it is essential that we consider the fragments that remain. Even though a teacher may have sufficient supplies, a boy is expected to pay for the material before he can claim his work as his own property, and in every class there are boys who cannot afford the cost of even the smallest amount of material. Salvaged material solves this problem. The teachers of Thomas A. Edison School have made use of the following forms of salvaged material:

Material and source	*Purpose for which used*
Wooden boxes, discarded packing cases from stores, etc.	Bird houses, toys, taborets, garden and lawn markers, signs, shoeshine boxes, etc.
Wood blocks and boards, discarded material from lumberyards, etc.	Furniture for the house, garden furniture, flower stands, etc.
Desk tops: Obsolete desks discarded by board of education.	Bench stops and vice jaws.
Fruit crates.	Trellises for flowers; toys.
Old bent-wood chairs broken beyond repair and discarded by board of education.	Cut to size, rebuilt and woven with fiber reed into sturdy rockers and straight chairs.
Tin cans, all sizes, from school cafeteria.	Scoops, baking pans, pails, funnels, desk sets, toys, etc.
Worn pieces and trimmings of sandpaper from woodworking factories.	For wood and finishing.
Scraps and trimmings of wood veneer from woodworking factories.	Edging and facing cheap or salvaged wood when used for furniture.
Corrugated cardboard boxes.	For creative work in the primary art classes.

[11] Thomas A. Edison School and the Depression, 1933. Thomas A. Edison School, Cleveland, Ohio. (Report of the principal.)

Of course, it is not possible to get enough discarded material to satisfy all shop needs. Practically all the fastening and finishing materials are bought. The salvaged material supplements rather than supplants the purchased supplies.

Beyond the local community are the mail-order houses, whose catalogs furnish pictures, price lists, and descriptions of articles. Seed and flower catalogs are sent upon application by some of the larger plant and seed nurseries and these are valuable for nature work. Dairy councils and health associations are ready to send suitable material for teaching health habits. Steamship lines contribute maps and descriptive material concerning tours of Europe. Railroad offices and travel bureaus offer additional valuable literature for work in geography.

From certain national and Federal agencies materials of varied type may also be secured. A request sent to any one of these for a list of those available for distribution or for exhibit purposes should bring prompt response. Among these agencies are the following:

American Child Health Association, 50 West Fiftieth Street, New York City.
Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.
Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
National Geographic Society, 1156 Sixteenth Street, NW., Washington, D.C.
National Health Council, 50 West Fiftieth Street, New York City.
National Safety Council, 20 North Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill.
National Tuberculosis Association, 50 West Fiftieth Street, New York City.
National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.
United States Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

21. WHAT TYPES OF AGENCIES EXIST TO HELP MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN?

Some teachers may feel that the problems which they are encountering with a given child require more specific help than is furnished in these pages. Others may wish to know more about what is being done in the country as a whole to help the retarded child. For both of these groups this section is written. There are local, State, and national agencies interested in retarded children. The American

Association on Mental Deficiency is the national organization devoted to the welfare of the mentally deficient. It holds annual sessions at which vital problems are considered, but it conducts no service bureau. Its purpose is primarily investigational, looking toward increase of knowledge and improvement of practices with reference to the group which it serves. Through its deliberations and the research carried on by its members, much valuable progress has been made.

It would be most desirable if in every local school system there were some person or persons whose responsibility it was to give psychological examinations, make recommendation for placement, and supervise the instruction of mentally retarded children. If institutional care is needed, he would be the person to take proper steps in that direction. Lacking this source of help, the teacher must seek elsewhere. He will, of course, work through his principal or superintendent if the matter involves administrative relationships or adjustments.

City or county health centers sometimes have a psychological department connected with them through which a study of the child's ability may be made. *County welfare boards* are also sometimes equipped to handle the psychological study of children. The *State board of welfare*, *State board of control*, and similar bodies should be able to give information regarding State facilities for retarded children. Prominent among these facilities are State and private residential schools, the superintendents of which will often be found most helpful in response to personal requests for information or advice. The teacher who is seeking a place for a child in the State school for the feeble-minded may learn through any of the above-named agencies how an application should be filed, as well as what further steps are necessary before placement is secured.

Child guidance clinics are growing more numerous each year. Their plan is to make a complete study of the child looking toward his best possible adjustment in school, at home, and in other phases of life. They work under various auspices. Some have been established with the support of the community chest; some are controlled by local boards of education; some are connected with hospitals, with relief organizations of public or private nature, or with State-supported juvenile agencies. Some are traveling clinics

giving service to various parts of the State. Whatever their control, they are all working toward the same end. Information regarding those which exist in your community and State may be secured through your school officials, your city or county health and welfare officials, or the State welfare boards.

The national and State congresses of parents and teachers are taking an increasingly active interest in the welfare of exceptional children of various types, and can often help to promote their cause. Besides the national chairman, there is in each of 22 States a State chairman for exceptional children, whose primary responsibility is to help parents and the public to understand and to meet the special needs they present.

State departments of education are beginning to add to their services the supervision of provisions for mentally deficient children. There are as yet, however, only 12 States in which one or more officials are specially charged with this responsibility. These are Alabama, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. If you teach in one of these States, call upon your State director or supervisor for all the help he can give you. If you live elsewhere, do what you can to arouse your parent-teacher associations and other civic organizations to the importance of the problem, and work persistently toward the day when the State will provide the support that you need.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

So much has been written on the education of mentally deficient children that it is impossible to list in brief space all the helpful material that has appeared. The following suggestions include a few of the publications of most practical value to teachers:

BOSTON SPECIAL CLASS TEACHERS. A syllabus for character building in special classes. Boston, Mass. Geo. T. Angell School, 1931. 87 p.

This book represents the results of the experience of the special class teachers in Boston. It describes activities particularly adapted to the needs of retarded children for teaching habits of health, self-control, self-reliance, reliability, fair play, and other desirable traits.

DAVIS, GUY PRATT. What shall the public schools do for the feeble-minded? Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1927. 225 p.

The author emphasizes the value of object lessons for retarded children, gives suggestions for their use and lists materials needed. Outlines a program of sense training, manual training, physical training, occupational training, and academic training.

GESELL, ARNOLD. The retarded child; how to help him. Bloomington, Ill., Public School Publishing Co., 1925. 100 p.

A manual of simple practical suggestions for planning an individual program for the deficient pupil.

HOLLINGWORTH, LETA S. The psychology of subnormal children. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1920. 288 p.

This book is addressed primarily to teachers. It gives a basic knowledge of the psychology, physical traits, and general nature of the mentally deficient.

INSKEEP, ANNIE D. Teaching dull and retarded children. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1926. 455 p.

The author is an experienced teacher of mentally retarded children. Out of her wealth of practical experience, she gives numerous concrete suggestions as to the type of instruction which has been most effective in her own classroom. Includes discussions of reading, language, spelling, arithmetic, and other subjects of the curriculum, with some attention also to games and the education "of the hand."

MARTENS, ELISE H., *ed.* Group activities for mentally retarded children. A symposium. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1933. (U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin, 1933, no. 7)

Gives accounts of selected group activities contributed by teachers of special classes for retarded children in various cities throughout the country. Includes activities on home and community life, foods, clothing, social studies, music, and in other fields.

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Course of study in special education for retarded children. Minneapolis, Minn., Board of Education, 1932. 262 p.

Outline of an activity curriculum worked out by the special class teachers of Minneapolis under the supervision of the director of special education.

WHIPPLE, HELEN DAVIS. Making citizens of the mentally limited. Bloomington, Ill., Public School Publishing Co., 1927. 375 p.

Discusses the subject matter to be taught to subnormal pupils in segregated special classes of public schools. Places emphasis upon those materials which meet a present need of the pupil and appeal strongly to his interests. Adds to the work in the three R's practical application of the manual arts, citizenship, character, and health education.

EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Available Publications of the United States Office of Education

EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1933, No. 2. Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1930–32, chapter VI. In press.

Bulletin, 1931, No. 20. Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1928–30, vol. I, chapter XI. 10¢.

TEACHERS' PROBLEMS WITH EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Pamphlet No. 40. I. Blind and Partially Seeing Children. 5¢.

Pamphlet No. 41. II. Gifted Children. In press.

(Other pamphlets in this series to follow.)

ORGANIZATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN WITHIN STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

Pamphlet No. 42. In press.

GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1933, No. 7. In press.

ADJUSTMENT OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1932, No. 18. 10¢.

PARENTS' PROBLEMS WITH EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1932, No. 14. 10¢.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1931, No. 21. 5¢.

PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION OF ATYPICAL CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1931, No. 10. 25¢.

THE SPEECH-DEFECTIVE SCHOOL CHILD

Bulletin, 1931, No. 7. 10¢.

SPEECH DEFECTS AND THEIR CORRECTION (for Teachers, Parents, and Pupils)

Pamphlet No. 22, 1931. 5¢.

SCHOOLS AND CLASSES FOR DELICATE CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1930, No. 22. 20¢.

EDUCATION OF CRIPPLED CHILDREN

Bulletin, 1930, No. 11. 20¢.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND CLASSES IN CITIES OF 10,000 POPULATION AND MORE IN THE UNITED STATES

Bulletin, 1930, No. 7. 10¢.

THE HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

School Health Studies No. 13, 1927. 5¢.